

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CCO-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 M-03 A-01 OPR-02 SY-10 USSS-00

NEA-10 IO-12 OC-06 SCA-01 AID-20 PM-09 H-02 INR-10

L-03 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 RSR-01 /138 W

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5737

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 3082

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MEX - ASEC

SUBJ: LEONHARDY KIDNAPPING

REF: STATE 85770

1. FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN KUBISCH- DEAN TELECON AND CONFIRMED REFTEL, I REVIEWED WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY RABASA U. S. POLICY CONCERNING KIDNAPPING OF DIPLOMATS. RABASA WAS FRANKLY SOMEWHAT STUNNED BY RESTATEMENT OF U. S. POLICY AGAINST ACCEDING TO TERRORIST DEMANDS AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES RELATING TO LEONHARDY KIDNAPPING. HE SAID HE WAS FULLY AWARE OF OVERALL U. S. POLICY THIS REGARD BUT SAID THAT HE FELT THIS NOT APPROPRIATE TIME TO DISCUSS " THEORETICS" AND PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS WHEN A MAN' S LIFE MAY HANG IN BALANCE. HE ADDED THAT WE WERE NOT PLAYING A GAME NOR DEBATING IN UN FORUM BUT EMBARKED UPON ALLOUT EFFORT TO PROTECT LIBERTY AND LIFE OF KIDNAPPED DIPLOMAT. SPECIFICALLY AND FIRMLY HE ASKED WHETHER WE WERE SUGGESTING THAT GOM NOT, REPEAT NOT, MEET KIDNAPPERS' DEMANDS.

2. IN REPLY I REITERATED OVERALL STATEMENT U. S. POLICY
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WITH EMPHASIS ON THAT PORTION WHICH RECOGNIZES SOVEREIGN RIGHT OF EACH STATE TO FOLLOW ITS OWN POLICIES AND TO HANDLE SPECIFIC INSTANCES IN THE MANNER IT DETERMINES BEST AND IN KEEPING WITH ITS OBLIGATIONS TO PROTECT SAFETY AND LIVES OF FOREIGN DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES.

3. NOT SATISFIED WITH THIS RESTATEMENT OF OVERALL U. S. POLICY, RABASA PERSISTENTLY REQUESTED SPECIFIC ANSWER TO HIS QUESTION. HE SAID I SHOULD APPRECIATE THE DEPTH OF REAL CONCERN AND CONSTERNATION OVER THIS KIDNAPPING HELD BY PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA, MEMBERS OF HIS CABINET, MEXICAN CONGRESSMEN AND OTHERS. HE SAID IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO INTERPRET TO THEM THIS RESTATEMENT OF KNOWN U. S. GOVERNMENT POLICY AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME.

4. I TOLD SECRETARY RABASA THAT RATHER THAN MY ATTEMPTING TO EXPLAIN FURTHER NUANCES OF U. S. POLICY I WOULD PREFER TO CONSULT WASHINGTON FOR MORE EXPLICIT REPLY TO HIS QUESTION.

5. AFTER CONSULTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY DESIGNATE KUBISCH AND MEMBERS WASHINGTON TASK FORCE I WAS ABLE TO ANSWER RABASA' S QUESTION BY STATING CLEARLY, " NO, WE ARE NOT SUGGESTING THAT GOM REFUSE TO ACCEDE TO DEMANDS OF KIDNAPPERS, THAT WE RECOGNIZE THAT THIS IS ENTIRELY SOVEREIGN DECISION OF GOM AS TO HOW TO HANDLE SITUATION IN THIS SPECIFIC CASE." I GAVE RABASA FULL BACKGROUND INFORMATION AS PRESENTED BY KUBISCH AND CONCURRED IN BY TASK FORCE, SEPARATING OUT WORLDWIDE POLICY AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR LIVES OF U. S. OFFICIALS FROM DIRECT INTEREST IN THIS SPECIFIC CASE IN SAVING THE LIFE OF CONGEN LEONHARDY. I REFERRED TO OVERALL POLICY AS DECLARED BY PRESIDENT NIXON BUT POINTED OUT WE NOT IN POSITION TO MAKE JUDGMENTS OR DECISIONS IN THIS CASE, WHICH ONLY MEXICAN AUTHORITIES CAN MAKE IN FULL ENJOYMENT THEIR SOVEREIGN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

6. ALTHOUGH NOT TOTALLY CONVERTED, RABASA SAID HE PERCEIVED LINE OF DISTINCTION WE WERE DRAWING. IN ANY CASE, HE HAD DISCUSSED OUR EARLIER CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA WHO FLATLY REITERATED MEXICO' S SOVEREIGN DECISION, IN ADHERENCE TO ITS OVERALL POLICY AND HUMANISTIC APPROACH TO THESE MATTERS, TO MAKE ALL REASONABLE EFFORTS, INCLUDING CONFIDENTIAL

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ACCESSION TO KIDNAPPERS' DEMANDS IN THIS CASE, TO PRESERVE THE SAFETY AND LIFE OF CONGEN LEONHARDY. AS A FOOTNOTE, RABASA SAID I COULDN' T IMAGINE HOW CONCERNED AND EVEN DEPRESSED ECHEVERRIA WAS OVER THIS DEVELOPMENT, WHICH HE CONSIDERED TO BE " A BLOW BELOW THE BELT". HE SAID THE PRESIDENT FELT HE HAD DONE EVERYTHING TO MAINTAIN FRANK AND OPEN DIALOGUE WITH ALL SECTORS OF MEXICAN BODY POLITIC,

INCLUDING STUDENTS, INTELLECTUALS, ETC., AND THERE WAS NO NEED TO RESORT TO SUCH DASTARDLY MEASURES TO PROTEST OR MAKE POLITICAL POINT.

7. CONVERSATION THEN TURNED TO MORE PLEASANT SUBJECT, I. E., CONSIDERATION OF DETAILS OF PROSPECTIVE TRIP OF SECRETARY ROGERS TO MEXICO IN CONNECTION WITH LATIN AMERICAN TOUR. RABASA WAS GRATIFIED TO LEARN THAT BARRING UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES LATIN AMERICAN TRIP STILL BEING PLANNED INCLUDING STOP IN MEXICO CITY.

8. INCIDENTALLY, IN THESE CONVERSATIONS AND IN CONVERSATIONS WITH INTERIOR MINISTER MOYA PALENCIA AND AG OJEDA PAULLADA ON LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN CASE I EXPRESSED IN MY CAPACITY AS CHARGE' MY WARM APPRECIATION AND THAT OF MEMBERS OF THIS MISSION FOR THE SINCERE CONCERN AND ALL- OUT EFFORT BEING MADE BY GOM FOR THE SAFE RETURN OF TERRY LEONHARDY. I ASSOCIATED MR. KUBISCH AND MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE WITH THIS SENTIMENT. I WOULD HOPE SOON TO BE IN A POSITION TO EXPRESS THE SAME IN THE NAME OF THE USG.
DEAN

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